

following World War II, I know firsthand the value of an education and of the critical role that this important veterans benefit played in my life. That was why I was especially pleased to join with the distinguished Senator from Virginia, Mr. WEBB, in achieving enactment of the new Post-9/11 GI Bill in 2008.

Now, with ten months of experience under the new program, I believe it is time to look at what improvements and modifications need to be made in order for the program to reach its potential. I note at the outset that this will not be a simple process. Nor will it be quickly and easily accomplished. There are issues that we can readily see need to be addressed. There are others, however, that are only just now coming to our attention as the program is implemented and veterans, servicemembers, and their families begin to receive benefits under the program.

I will highlight some of the provisions that are contained in the bill I am introducing today:

It would make members of the National Guard and Reserve programs who were inadvertently omitted from inclusion fully eligible for benefits.

It would make all types of training—including vocational programs, OJT and apprenticeship training, flight, all types of non-college degree training and more—eligible for benefits under the new program. By doing this, individuals would not need to make an irreversible decision as to whether or not to receive benefits under the old Montgomery GI Bill or under the new program.

It would eliminate the complicated, confusing and, in some cases, inequitable calculation of State-by-State tuition and fee caps to determine benefits for individuals enrolled in degree programs. Basically, it would provide that eligible individuals enrolled in degree-granting programs of study at public institutions anywhere in the United States would pay little, if any, out of pocket costs for their education. For students enrolled in other institutions of higher learning, benefits would be paid based on a national average cost of education which would be indexed and increased annually.

It would provide for a modified living allowance to be paid in the case of an

individual pursuing a program of education solely through distance learning. Individuals who currently are studying through a combination of distance and classroom training would continue to receive benefits as they do now.

It would make a book allowance award of up to \$1,000 available to individuals enrolled while on active duty and their spouses.

It would allow individuals enrolled in VA's program of rehabilitation and training under chapter 31 of title 38 who also have eligibility for the new chapter 33 program to elect the program from which to receive their subsistence allowance. This would mean that a service-connected disabled OEF/OIF veteran would not need to elect to training under the new GI Bill and forego the valuable counseling and support services available under chapter 31 in order to receive an increased living allowance.

It would modify the manner in which the living allowance is calculated to reflect the rate at which training is pursued.

It would ensure that the same period of active duty cannot be used to establish eligibility for more than one program of education.

This is not a complete recitation of all the provisions contained in the measure I am introducing today. In addition, I do not expect that every provision of the measure will necessarily be supported by all the stakeholders involved in this important issue. Indeed, I imagine there could be some who will be critical of some provisions in the proposal and will come forward to offer improvements and modifications.

What my measure is intended to do, is to serve as a starting point to move forward in this important yet very complicated and complex endeavor. I strongly believe that whatever is done in this connection must not be done in a piecemeal manner. We need a full and deliberative consideration of all the issues in order to craft the best possible approach to delivering these important benefits to our Nation's veterans and those who are serving in uniform.

I look forward to working with all our colleagues and others on these issues in the days ahead. As I noted,

this will not be done quickly or easily but this measure will serve as a focus for our discussions and decisions.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3447

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010".

#### SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) MODIFICATION OF DEFINITIONS THAT CONCERN ELIGIBILITY FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.—

(1) MODIFICATION OF DEFINITION OF ACTIVE DUTY WITH RESPECT TO MEMBERS OF RESERVE COMPONENTS GENERALLY.—Paragraph (1)(B) of section 3301 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "of title 10." and inserting the following: "of title 10—

"(i) for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the reserve components of the Armed Forces; or

"(ii) in support of a contingency operation (as defined in section 101(a) of title 10)."

(2) EXPANSION OF DEFINITION OF ACTIVE DUTY TO INCLUDE SERVICE IN NATIONAL GUARD FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES.—Paragraph (1) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(C) In the case of a member of the Army National Guard of the United States or Air National Guard of the United States, in addition to service described in subparagraph (B), full-time service—

"(i) in the National Guard of a State for the purpose of organizing, administering, recruiting, instructing, or training the National Guard; and

"(ii) in the National Guard under section 502(f) of title 32 when authorized by the President or Secretary of Defense for the purpose of responding to a national emergency declared by the President and supported by Federal funds."; and

(3) EXPANSION OF DEFINITION OF ENTRY LEVEL AND SKILL TRAINING TO INCLUDE ONE STATION UNIT TRAINING.—Paragraph (2)(A) of such section is amended by inserting "or One Station Unit Training" before the period at the end.

(b) CLARIFICATION OF APPLICABILITY OF HONORABLE SERVICE REQUIREMENT FOR CERTAIN DISCHARGES AND RELEASES FROM THE